

PARCEL POST QUESTION

Argument Against Increasing Weight Limit Beyond Fifty Pounds.

[The Evansville, Ind., Courier, May 7, 1914.]

To the Editor of the Courier:

Your editorial in Saturday's issue, April 18, under the heading of "Parcels Post and Express Companies," has my attention.

The undertaking by the postoffice department of the general government to transport parcels without weight limit, or, if limited to fifty pounds, is a great economic problem not easy of solution.

The question is asked, "would it be a calamity to have a wasteful and expensive agency driven out of business by a more economical one?" "Would it be disastrous for business to have products moved more cheaply?" This disposes of the matter in a very summary way. But where the logic? The statement is an implication that postoffice department can do this parcels post business more cheaply than the express companies. But no argument is adduced to prove it. That the government produces anything or performs any service for the public cheaper than individuals or private corporations is open to grave doubts.

The express companies are now under the supervision of the interstate commerce commission.

This is a department of the general government created by law to regulate transportation. Is it fair to the express companies for another department of the government to enter into the same kind of transportation business at a lesser rate than that approved by the interstate commerce commission for these companies?

To my mind this is a sane question. These companies have vested interests and the government should undertake to protect these interests, rather than to destroy them. If it be argued that these express companies have full right to enter into competition with the government's rate, it may easily be assumed that these companies will gladly undertake to do this, if the postoffice department shall make a rate that will cover all costs for service, including such interest on the cost of the vast equipment devoted to this service, as the Interstate Commerce Commission shall decide these companies are entitled to on their invested capital.

These companies have been taxed for these government owned postoffices and equipment used in this transportation service, and it does not seem fair to them that the power of the government through the postoffice department should be used for their overthrow.

Furthermore, the people—other than those who make use of this transportation service—have a right to a voice in this matter and to demur to taxation to make up for losses incurred on this scheme of transportation.

Moreover the patrons of the service have no right to, nor are they demanding a rate that shall not be commensurate with the service rendered and that shall fully compensate the government.

When it is understood that the government does not operate the postoffice department for profit, and assuming that the department can perform this service as cheaply as the express companies can, then it is clearly evident that the express companies cannot maintain themselves in this unequal contest; for they must have a profit if they are to remain in business.

The only hope open to the companies now is that their patrons will in consideration of better service than offered by the government and the indemnity feature of the service, be willing to pay such rate as the Interstate Commerce Commission shall decide they are entitled to.

I am informed by one of the local companies that scarcely more than twenty-five per cent. of incoming and outgoing freight weights over fifty pounds. Much of this weight of fifty pounds or less could be as well transported by the parcels post, and if at an arbitrary price fixed by law, less than the express companies can afford to carry, then we may logically conclude that it will go that way; then if later on the weight limit is extended to one hundred pounds, there will be little left for the express companies to do; so little in fact that the business would not be remunerative.

If it is the settled policy of the government to extend the parcels post facilities, then it will need the same facilities that the express companies now have in service.

Why not then take over these facilities rather than to duplicate them and thus save the great loss that must necessarily follow if forced out of business.

It occurs to me that it would be just as unfair to these companies to force them out of business by the power of general government and at the expense of the people, as it would to the railroads to build parallel lines throughout the country by taxing the people, and then by law make rates that would put the railroads out of business.

Means for the speedy and cheap transportation of small parcels to every part of the country is a public necessity. Where such means do not now exist or are insufficient the government may properly supply them. But where the government can give neither better nor cheaper service than the agencies now provide, ruinous competition is unjustifiable.

By cheaper service is meant service at no more cost to the people, and this to my mind is the essence of the whole proposition.

That the parcels post service is a great convenience to people throughout the country served by the rural mail carriers cannot be doubted. But without special equipment only small parcels of small value can be cheaply handled and the service should be confined to this.

Since the government assumes no liability for loss or damage and has no accounting to make on these small, inexpensive parcels, an economic saving is possible. But when larger and more expensive articles are admitted to the mails, there is need for proper accounting, and more elaborate equipment, and then it is doubtful if the government can perform the service

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at a lesser cost than the existing agencies.

There is another feature of this parcels post service that may well have the thoughtful consideration of all of our people; for it threatens a partial if not complete revolution of existing commercial relations.

The year 1913 saw an extension of the mail order business of the country of not less than twenty million dollars. Probably much more. And the parcels post contributed largely to this enormous business. As these mail order houses are located in the largest cities of the country, it transfers this immense traffic from more than two thousand country stores doing business in excess of ten thousand dollars. Furthermore it diverts the same business from the ordinary channels of distribution through the jobber, to these same retail stores now located in every jobbing center throughout the country.

If the government is fully compensated for the cost of this service and in addition a margin of profit sufficient to suitably reward private capital engaged in a like carrying business, and it is then found to be an economic factor in distribution, it would seem that the revolution or evolution should go on.

If, however, the government performs this service as a whole or even in part, at the expense of the people, then what? Is anybody wronged if by the extension of this service the present channels of distribution are disrupted and jobbers and retailers alike are driven out of business as are the express companies being driven out now?

This is an economic question of such import, that it should demand the serious consideration of every student of economics in the country. And for the present I believe the Postmaster General should wait any further extension of the weight limit, until he can be sure that the department can demonstrate its ability to properly and economically care for the business that will come to it under his recent orders.

BRYON PARSONS.

A LITTLE NONSENSE NOW AND THEN GOOD FOR US.

"Into each life some rain must fall," but don't get it into your head that every little shower is a cloud burst.

There is nothing bad by turning corners too sharply.

Pay your taxes, but see to it that the money is wisely and economically expended. You owe this much to the community.

"Did you read about that Coahuila affair?"

"What is it, a Mexican battle or something Roosevelt has shot?"

Any mother can tell you that her boy learns to swear from the Other Children in the neighborhood.

Peck—"I'm surprised that you should lose your self-control, Maria. That's something you never saw me do."

Mrs. Peck—"You lost control of yourself the day I married you. Now hold your tongue."

Another reason why you should not let the grass grow under your feet is that it is bad for the grass.

The best friend that a high-minded man can have is himself; but it is the most exacting friendship in the world.

College Widow—"You displayed some marvelous curves this afternoon."

Pitcher Yaleyard (who had observed her standing between the diamond and the sun)—"And so did you!"

Some men are born of poor but honest parents. Did you ever hear of one born of poor but dishonest parents?

"Colorado women up in arms," says a headline. Whose arms?

We are waiting patiently to see whether the Chicago policemen are going to make arrests with clubs or with hatpins!

In Texas the other day a Mr. Pride defeated a Mr. Fall for Sheriff. This was scripture fulfilled—"Pride goeth before a fall!"

A scheme of dock extensions which will cost \$7,500,000 has been prepared by the Clyde trust special committee of Glasgow. It is proposed to advance the harbor rates to an amount which will bring in an additional \$300,000 a year.

Since she got that divorce, Mme. Schumann-Heink is probably able to sing joyful lays.

Despite the danger, Huerta cannot tear himself away from the brand of liquor they use in Mexico City.

A number of dogs set free by a medical college in Chicago have caused a panic in that city, but how about the youthful doctors who have been turned loose?

The Kentucky insurance mediators seem to have the advantage over the Mexican mediators in the matter of securing peace.

"THE GOOD OLD DAYS" HAD THEIR DRAWBACKS.

Those who are fond of raving over the happy days of yore and criticizing acrimoniously the present perturbed times for their surplus of ill-judged legislation may derive some consolation from a perusal of the old blue laws of New Haven, which are printed below.

"No one shall be a free man or have a vote unless he is converted and a member of one of the churches allowed in the dominion.

"No food or lodging shall be offered to a heretic.

"No one shall cross a river on the Sabbath day but authorized clergymen.

"No one shall travel, cook victuals, make beds, sweep houses, cut hair or shave on the Sabbath day.

"No one shall kiss his or her children on the Sabbath or fasting days. The Sabbath day shall begin at sunset Saturday.

"Whoever wears clothes trimmed with gold, silver or bone lace above one shilling per yard shall be presented by the Grand Jurors and the Selectmen shall tax the estate £300 (\$1,500).

"Whoever brings cards or dice into the dominion shall pay a fine of £5 (\$25).

"No one shall eat mince pies, dance, play cards or play any instrument of music except the drum, trumpet or jewsharp.

"No person shall court a maid in person or by letter without obtaining the consent of her parents. Five pound penalty for first offense, £10 penalty for second offense and for third offense imprisonment during the pleasure of the Court."

That the ancient lawmakers were grossly misguided needs no further proof than the fact that they considered the drum, the trumpet and the jewsharp "instruments of music."

Wall Street Journal.

When a woman is a little leary about going out in a transparent dress that leaves little to the imagination, she remembers she has something on Eve, and she takes a chance.

LUKE McLUKE SAYS.

(Cincinnati Enquirer.)

The world would be a whole lot better place if we did less reforming and more bathing.

A letter of recommendation will get you a job about as often as an obituary will get you into Heaven.

The world is filled with men who are willing to bear the burdens of others if the others will pay express rates.

Ajax may have defied the lightning. But he was a lucky man that didn't live to defy an automobile.

Personal liberty, as construed by our best little Prohibitionists, is the liberty to choke to death if you don't like water.

When the headache is bigger than the Big Time that caused it, you are beginning to grow old and stale.

There was a time when we had men who would rather fight than eat. But nowadays a man never starts a fight until he is satisfied that he can win.

A fellow who won't listen to reason is a fat head who doubts the truth of your argument.

The fool men have a lot of faults. But, bless their hearts, they don't kiss each other when they meet on the street.

Every time a carpenter fixes a step or a tinner repairs a leaky spout, a woman goes around and tells her friends that she has had her house remodeled.

When a fat woman sees another woman who is as fat as she is, she says to her husband: "Am I as fat as SHE is?" because she knows that he dassent say "Yes."

Right now the June bride feels like an heiress to millions because she has the Wealth of His Love. But next June she will have a lovely time stinging him for a dime every morning and stalling off the collectors for the installment houses.

A lot of Trouble in this life is caused by women who try to see how close to the danger line they can go without stepping over it.

What has become of the old-fashioned man who used to sit out on the front porch at night and play the accordion?

Chances for peace in Mexico are so bright that the country will soon prove unattractive for a large part of its fighting population.

Some action will have to be taken toward widening out the ocean if the big ships continue to crash into each other.

ALWAYS LEAD TO BETTER HEALTH.

Serious sicknesses start in disorders of the stomach, liver and kidneys. The best corrective and preventive is Dr. King's New Life Pills. They purify the Blood—Prevent Constipation, keep Liver, Kidneys and Bowels in healthy condition. Give you better health by ridding the system of fermenting and gassy foods. Effective and mild. 25c. at your druggist.

Bucklin's Arnica Salve for all hurts. (June)

If Vardeman is not careful he will get into a sure enough fight in the Senate some day and have his flowing locks disheveled.

When you feel discouraged, nervous, tired, worried or despondent it is sure sign you need MOTT'S NERVE PILLS. They renew the normal vigor at make life worth living. Be sure and ask for Mott's Nerve Pills Price \$1.00 by druggist.

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It stops the breeding of most. It keeps away all other germs. It soothes and heals as sure as you use it. A 25c. box will prevent hundreds of dollars of trouble.

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SUMMER GOODS MUST GO!

Let Us Start You With The Hot Weather.

This Sale Began Saturday, June 13.

Will continue the rest of the hot month, with Porch Chairs, Swings, the No-Whip Shades, Refrigerators and Lawn Furniture. Let us show you what a saving we have in store for you.

Gas Stoves

Are Included In This Summer Sale.

So don't let the hot weather burn you up when you can have a Gas Range to protect you. See our prices.

Refrigerators

THE NEW ICEBERG.

The reduced prices will interest you. The large Refrigerator was \$35.00 NOW \$27.50 and on down to \$6.75.

Remember these goods must go, and we can save you many dollars by buying during our Summer Sale. Just a look will help you.

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